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ABSTRACT

Compiled from information contained in the Program Year 1994-95 Annual Narrative Performance Reports submitted by states to the U.S. Department of Education, this paper shares selected information on recent developments in workplace education programs for adults. Section 1 describes programs that exhibited strong partnerships and collaboration in these states: Connecticut, Illinois, New Hampshire, Oregon, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Section 2 describes programs in the following states that ensure that instructional methods meet the rapidly changing needs of the workplace and the learner: California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Idaho, Kentucky, South Carolina, Washington, and Virgin Islands. Section 3 identifies these states in which workplace education enrollments increased due to improved marketing strategies: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. Section 4 describes marketing and incentives to promote the formation of workplace education partnerships in these states: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, and Ohio. Section 5 describes program expansion in Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Section 6 reports on student assessment and achievement in Florida, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, and South Carolina. Section 7 describes staff development in Georgia, Idaho, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin. (YLB)

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A State Workplace Education Update: Selected Program Activities

Program Year 1994-95

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
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A State Workplace Education Update: Selected Program Activities

Workplace education focuses on the literacy and basic skills training workers need to gain new employment, retain present jobs, advance their careers or increase productivity. It plays a vital role in promoting America's competitiveness in a global economy and in helping adult learners achieve their academic and professional goals.

Federal assistance in establishing workplace literacy programs is authorized through Section 371 of the Adult Education Act and through the Basic Grant to States. In Program Year 1994-95, some states used a portion of their basic adult education grant to support workplace education programs. These programs involved partnerships among education agencies, businesses, community-based organizations, labor organizations and private industry councils.

This paper has been compiled from information contained in the Program Year 1994-95 Annual Narrative Performance Reports. Its purpose is to share selected information and facilitate dialogue across the country on recent developments in workplace education programs for adults. Descriptive information is currently available for 41 states, insular areas and territories.

Program Year 1994-95 was characterized by the following changes in Federally-funded state administered workplace education: the establishment of over 130 new workplace literacy programs and sites; an increase in enrollment; an increase in the use of marketing tools to initiate contacts with businesses; an increased emphasis on workplace literacy themes in adult education professional development; and an increase in legislation encouraging the formation of workplace literacy partnerships.

Collaboration

By their nature, workplace literacy programs require strong partnerships and collaboration among educators, employers and employees. These programs also benefit from collaborations with labor organizations, private industry councils and community-based organizations.

Connecticut

Connecticut strengthened its partnerships with the regional workforce development boards in nine service delivery areas, helping them to identify employment and training needs within their areas. During 1994-95, the state department initiated a survey of business and industry on their perceptions of the GED.

Illinois

The associate superintendent overseeing School-to-Work and Adult Education, realizing the importance of a literate workforce with basic skills, is assuring that there is close coordination between the two programs. Policy discussions that are currently in progress will assure a more thorough integration of basic skills acquisition into the School-to-Work efforts in Illinois.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire provided technical assistance to local directors to assist them in developing partnerships with local businesses.

Oregon

Interagency activities continue to increase as Oregon's adult education office designs an accountability system, workplace literacy and School-to-Work programs.

The Workplace Basics project started seventeen new pilot sites. They included JTPA, JOBS, adult education, youth corrections, teen parents, family literacy, and skill centers; all of which were multi-agency partnerships. In addition to adult education, JOBS, JTPA, professional, technical, corrections and skills centers all contributed funds to support the project.

Tennessee

The Department of Economic and Community Development, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Performance Learning Cooperative and numerous businesses and industries participated in successful cooperative ventures.

West Virginia

The workplace program continued its relationship with the West Virginia Development Office and also forged ties with the Robert C. Byrd Institute.

Curriculum and Instruction

Programs continually review instructional methods to ensure that they meet the rapidly changing needs of the workplace and the learner. Many programs emphasize instruction which is participatory and contextualized.

California

Legislation was passed in 1995 to encourage authorized school districts to expend up to five percent of their state apportionment funds to provide innovative forms of instructional delivery, such as worksite education and distance learning.

Colorado

Four guides in the Workplace Education Development Notebook were produced: **Workplace Education Overview; Workplace Education Advisory Councils; Understanding Organizational Culture; Marketing Workplace Education to Business; and Identifying Critical Job Tasks.**

Connecticut

Workplace education initiatives have grown to over twenty throughout the state. Valley Regional Adult Education developed, piloted and disseminated a workplace education model which has been successfully implemented in worksites across the state.

The state enhanced its current Connecticut Adult Performance Program to include an employability and training component.

District of Columbia

One center conducted basic skills training for students interested in careers in facilities management. The training included a hands-on contextualized training component in the DC public schools.

Idaho

ABE programs used the following practices to focus on workforce preparation: viewing computer literacy as a basic skill; using applied curriculum; introducing career exploration during in-take and orientation to help motivate and focus students; and striking a balance between individualized and group activities. Furthermore, adult learning centers worked in cooperation with at least five large employers during Program Year 1994-95.

Kentucky

Job Advantage competencies were defined for a job readiness component in four major occupational sectors: manufacturing, health care, construction, and retail/hospitality. Model job-specific curricula were developed through the National Workplace Literacy Program.

South Carolina

The State Literacy Workplace Center developed curricula for adults seeking employment and for workers who want to maintain employment and advance in their careers.

Washington

During the past year, the Office of Adult Literacy funded six special projects to further implement the Washington State Core Competencies and improve instructional practices. Project themes included learning styles, workplace literacy, and ESL assessment.

I-CANS (Integrated Curriculum for Achieving Necessary Skills) is a workplace-oriented curriculum that merges the ABE Core Competencies, JTPA Washington Basics Competencies, and the Northwest Basic Competencies. The mission of I-CANS was to develop and promote a skills-based instructional system that includes curriculum, training, project evaluation, research and development, technical assistance, transition strategies, and coordination and resource development. The curriculum includes integrated and standardized assessment, relevant context-based instruction, and team-oriented instructional strategies in a process that recognized adult learners' motivational, cognitive, and sociocultural needs. The I-CANS curriculum was initially

pilot-tested at ten sites, with seven sites added the following year. Five new sites, three of which were Federally-funded, received training in 1995.

Virgin Islands

Technical assistance was given to satellite workplace programs as needed. Programs were monitored and more closely coordinated than in previous years.

Enrollment Patterns

In many states, workplace education enrollments increased during Program Year 1994-95 due to improved marketing strategies, financial incentives and the establishment of statewide systems for program development.

Alabama

During Program Year 1994-95, over 2,900 employees attended 142 workplace literacy classes.

Arkansas

Adult education had 10,286 adults enrolled in industry/business classes at different sites in Program Year 1994-95. An additional 24,690 unemployed adults were enrolled in adult education classes.

Florida

In Program Year 1994-95, 3,459 students were served at the work site.

Georgia

Employer workplace literacy programs in Georgia comprised 282 workplace classes, serving 3,156 employees.

Kentucky

There were over 900 employees enrolled at 58 workplace sites.

Louisiana

Thirty-seven worksite classes enrolled over 1,100 learners. Hundreds of other adults were referred to learning centers by employers.

Nevada

Classes at worksites increased.

New Mexico

In Program Year 1994-95, five workplace sites were supported through four ABE programs in New Mexico. Participating businesses and institutions included Levi-Strauss, Eastern New Mexico Medical Center and Johnson Controls, Inc.

North Carolina

There were over 10,000 employees enrolled in 1,540 classes. With the ability to use funding for program coordinators, assessment/retention specialists and recruiters, local programs began to expand their efforts to include workplace education.

Oklahoma

During Program Year 1994-95, 300 employees received instruction in 20 work sites.

Ohio

A comparison of Program Year 1994-95 data to that of the previous year indicates that there were increases in the number of workplace education sites (from 198 to 231) and in the number of participants served (from 8,568 to 9,715).

Pennsylvania

In Program Year 1994-95, Pennsylvania improved its grant awards process so that employers could get access to workplace funds in a more timely manner. The Bureau currently funds a wide group of educational providers, including: area vocational technical schools, Opportunities Industrialization Corporation (OIC) movements and refugees agencies. In the business sector, Pennsylvania workforce education involves some of America's most successful companies: Hershey, Harley Davidson, Conrail, International Paper Company and Osram Sylvania.

South Carolina

Enrollment in workplace education programs grew 24.2 percent in Program Year 1994-95. There were over 15,000 learners enrolled in workplace education at 136 sites.

Tennessee

Workplace literacy programs currently exist in nearly every county in Tennessee. Over 200 sites enrolled 2,163 employees.

Texas

Texas funded special workplace literacy programs for 3,792 workers at 86 worksites.

West Virginia

During Program Year 1994-95, over 250 employees were enrolled in workplace education programs.

Marketing and Incentives

States are utilizing a number of marketing tools to promote the formation of workplace education partnerships including brochures, videos, presentations and surveys. Tax credits and legislation also encourage businesses and organizations to participate in workplace education.

California

Legislation was passed in 1995 to encourage authorized school districts to expend up to five percent of their state apportionment funds to provide innovative forms of instructional delivery such as worksite education and distance learning.

Colorado

In Program Year 1994-95, thirty businesses were contacted with promotional materials on workplace education. Of the thirty companies contacted, nineteen requested more information and technical assistance. Of these nineteen companies, nine signed agreements with ABE programs, including the Hyatt Regency, Keebler Company, Marriott, Landmark Inn, Excel Corporation and Stokes Ellis.

Florida

A video overview of Florida's workforce education programs entitled "Bottomline Business Strategies" is available.

Georgia

Georgia has developed several ways of recognizing success in workplace literacy and encouraging the increased participation of business and industry in developing on-site workplace literacy programs. Two hundred twenty-four (224) organizations have received the Governor's Award for Achievement in Workplace Learning in recognition for their efforts in development, assessment, and implementation of workplace learning programs. Furthermore, the Georgia Tax Credit for Adult Basic Skills Education has provided a tax credit of one-third the costs of education per full-time equivalent student. This tax credit has served as an important incentive for businesses to provide or sponsor basic skills education programs for their employees. Currently 69 companies have received the tax credit certification.

Ohio

The Department has funded several Section 353 Special Demonstration Projects in the area of workplace literacy awareness, promotion, marketing and design.

Program Expansion

Program expansion has been accomplished through aggressive marketing, capacity building and system building. Federal funds are often used to leverage other public and private support for workplace education programs.

Colorado

In Program Year 1994-95, thirty businesses were contacted with promotional materials on workplace education. Of the thirty companies contacted, nineteen requested more information and technical assistance. Of these nineteen companies, nine signed agreements with ABE programs, including the Hyatt Regency, Keebler Company, Marriott, Landmark Inn, Excel Corporation and Stokes Ellis.

Idaho

The JOBS basic skills projects and the newly-added JTPA 8 Percent projects are specifically focused on workforce preparation. These projects attempt to deliver basic skills instruction

within the context of workplace applications, including the new basics, as reported by the SCANS Report and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

Kentucky

Kentucky completed the planning phase for the SKILL Initiative, a capacity-building effort for workplace essential skills.

South Carolina

Fifty-six new programs were established with businesses/industries during the school year.

West Virginia

Workplace education projects were completed in seven counties during Program Year 1994-95 and new projects were initiated in six other counties.

Wisconsin

The state set aside $500,000.00 to support the workplace initiative. LEAs are gaining the expertise and visibility to expand services to new sites which can afford to pay the total cost on a contractual basis.

Student Assessment and Achievement

Learner outcomes in workplace education programs can include: promotions, improved attendance, improved safety, higher productivity and advancement to higher education. Programs document learner progress through both standardized and customized assessments.

Florida

According to self-reported data, 7,881 adults reported having gained employment or secured employment/obtained a job advancement as a result of having participated in Florida's education program. Through the Florida Education, Training and Partnership Program (FETPP), Florida is currently collecting data on job employment and will be examining how adult education directly impacts a student's ability to obtain a job.

Iowa

A manufacturing company in Mason City, Iowa conducted a survey of its employees' reading and math skills. The survey was used to determine the starting point for basic skills training opportunities. Employees who did not have adequate math and reading skills were offered free instruction in basic math and reading.

The Indian Hills Community College workplace literacy pilot project, Workforce Learning System, was used in three local companies to determine basic skill levels of employees and to establish training for those companies' employees. Preliminary assessment results showed over 35% of employees tested at or below the high school entry level in both math and reading.

Colorado

The CDE Workplace Education project developed numerous training sessions for instructors, teachers and volunteers on "Evaluating Program Effectiveness" and "Conducting the Job Task Analysis". Additional training was provided to instructors on administering the CASAS assessment.

The workplace education consultant gave three presentations at state conferences and one presentation at the Region 8 State Director's meeting.

On August 26, 1994, the Workplace Education Conference provided training for 140 participants, one third of whom represented the business sector.

A Workplace Area Resource Teacher conducted 3 training sessions at regional conferences and completed a Workplace Education Initiatives Survey of 71 programs.

Nevada

Nevada continues to be involved in the USA/Mexico Literacy Project. One goal of this project is to identify key skills and competencies in selected industries. The project also will adopt or develop an assessment instrument that allows workplace educators to determine how strong workers are in key skills and make recommendations on how workplace education programs can help workers attain these skills. In the past three years, Nevada has been involved in field testing and using Mexican adult education materials for Hispanic ESL students in Nevada's classes.

South Carolina

Adult education helped 3,243 adults to gain employment and 3,665 adults to obtain job security.

Staff Development

Federal funds play a critical role in providing staff development for workplace literacy educators. Many states use funds authorized under Section 353 of the Adult Education Act to support teacher training and staff development activities in the area of workplace literacy.

Georgia

Workplace literacy has been a focus of the monthly staff development workshops at the Georgia Literacy Resource Center as well as workshops at the annual literacy conference.

Idaho

Statewide planning for professional development focused primarily on family literacy and workforce preparation.

Nevada

A special demonstration project in workforce development was granted to the Community College of Southern Nevada.

North Carolina

Adult education staff were involved extensively with task forces established as a result of the work of the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness.

Pennsylvania

The state also uses some of its Section 353 funds to publish workplace newsletters and to develop curriculum materials in workplace team training, basic literacy skills for the workplace, workplace literacy for health care workers, self-testing for workers, outreach to small businesses and outreach to the area Chambers of Commerce. Priority areas within workplace literacy instruction include: basic math skills and GED preparation for all industries, especially manufacturing; ESL training for industries with large numbers of limited English proficient adults; literacy education for service employees working with labeled products; higher level skills such as team building, critical thinking, quality improvement and decision making.

South Carolina

Through a Section 353 grant, adult education providers throughout the state received training on program and curriculum development.

Tennessee

In the upcoming year, professional development training will be offered in assessment, training and accommodations for teaching learning disabled adults in the workplace.

Washington

The Office of Adult Literacy awarded six Special Projects Grants in Program Year 1994-95. Priorities for funding included workplace basic skills, among others.

Wisconsin

A national workplace literacy conference is being planned by the Center for Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin.